DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 342 059 EA 023 532

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TITLE Vision Is Not Enough: A Plan for School Change in the 90's.
PUB DATE May 90
NOTE 13p.
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Business; *Community Cooperation; *Community Development; *Educational Change; Educational Trends; Elementary Secondary Education; Futures (of Society); *Organizational Effectiveness; *School Organization
IDENTIFIERS *Pasco School District WA

ABSTRACT

Dynamic organizations are characterized by a compelling vision that focuses on results and employee commitment to growth. Over a period of 3 years an attempt was made to identify what it would take to create and maintain a dynamic living organization that has the ability to learn and grow on its own. Research was conducted in visits to organizations across North America and three continents; interviews were held with CEO's and other key employees at corporations, newly formed entrepreneurial businesses, and nonprofit organizations. Three main sections comprise the paper. The first titled "The Challenge," provides a perspective on why businesses, nonprofits, schools, and even nations must learn how to create communities of learners if they are to survive and thrive. Section 2, "The Dynamic Company," highlights the driving force behind successful organizations. The final section, "Dynamic Schools," describes how these characteristics of dynamic businesses have been applied in the schools of Pasco, Washington. (RR)

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Vision is Not Enough

A Plan for School Change in the 90's

by

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Vision is Not Enough
By Larry Nyland

What does it take to create a dynamic, living, growing organization? An organization that enables common people to achieve the extraordinary? Vision, yes. But vision is not enough.

Dynamic organizations are characterized by:

- ❑ a vision that is compelling,
- ❑ decision-making that focuses on results, and
- ❑ employee commitment to growth.

These three steps are integrated, cycling back and forth repeatedly. Only when an organization learns to consistently act upon these three principles over time do they become living, learning communities.

Dynamic leaders nurture this spirit of learning together, continuously nourishing this "soul of the community." They kindle the flame, tending it, and fueling it. The result is a living, dynamic organization; one that learns from itself and continues to grow.

Now, more than ever, organizations struggle with these issues. "Perestroika" has changed the way of life for millions in Eastern Europe. Deregulation and global competition make change a way of life for U.S. corporations. And in my business, public education, the concept of "restructuring" is changing the way we work.

The Fellowship

The thrust of my three-year fellowship with the W.K. Kellogg Foundation was to identify what it would take to create and maintain a dynamic, living organization that has the ability to learn and grow on its own. I wanted to learn how to create sustainable growth over time.

I researched hundreds of organizations across North America and three other continents, personally interviewing CEO's and other key employees at corporations, newly formed entrepreneurial businesses, and non-profit organizations.

During the period of my fellowship, I continued my responsibilities as superintendent of a public school district of 7000 students. This chapter explores what I have learned from business organizations and how I have integrated those concepts to create a dynamic, learning community for Pasco School District.

This chapter includes three sections:

- ❑ Section one, titled The Challenge, provides a perspective on why businesses, non-profits, schools, even nations must learn how to create communities of learners if they are to survive and thrive.
- ❑ Section two, The Dynamic Company, highlights the driving force behind successful organizations.
- ❑ Section three, The Dynamic School, describes how these characteristics of dynamic businesses have been applied in the schools of Pasco, Washington.

The Challenge

Until recently I was convinced that, although the U.S. faced stiff competition abroad, "Yankee Ingenuity" would continue to be our major product. Today, I see that world competition challenges us precisely at our previous center of strength - the quality and ingenuity of our work force.

My Kellogg research took me to four continents where I learned firsthand about the challenges of global competition. In Mexico, the machiadora production plants showed the advantages of assembling U.S. parts just over the border in Mexico. In Europe there was a new sense of European cooperation that would give them a competitive edge worldwide. In Hong Kong the entrepreneurs contracted production in many Asian locations and sold their products worldwide. Here in the U.S., I met with executives at the Ford Motor Company where, even after the most profitable years in their history,

they were still not sure that they had turned the corner. Illustrating this point, one top manager said that they were not sure whether **"the light we see is the end of the tunnel...or the oncoming train"** of new waves of competition from Japan and Korea.

Even closer to home, a communications firm in Washington State contracted to provide a new multi-million dollar telephone system for a major client. When the system failed to perform properly, the communications firm asked their programmers to make the needed repairs. The programmers estimated that the repairs would take eighteen months. The firm finally found a team of twelve programmers from India who not only fixed the system in two months; they provided additional features that had not been thought possible.

Changes like those described here did not come about by accident. Singapore provides an example of how these changes are being carefully planned. The nation of Singapore has embarked upon a program of intentional and systemic investment in its people and its infrastructure. Individuals who only a few years ago lived a meager existence in the vilest of slums are now training to be engineers on production lines. Ira Magaziner, in his book The Silent War, tells how government learning centers, developed in partnership with corporations, teach skills and provide advanced training. The result is an environment where highly trained workers help redesign the production lines to achieve even greater productivity.

In other words, the U.S. has no monopoly on "Yankee Ingenuity." Every nation can successfully compete by educating its people and many are doing just that.

As a final example, the case of General Electric puts this in perspective. G.E. recently decided to invest $120 million in retooling its production line for refrigerators, redesigning the line from top to bottom. Result: the cost of one key component, the compressor, was reduced from $45 to $29. At least for the present, G.E. has maintained its competitive edge. They did not make their decision to retool lightly, reaching that conclusion only after seriously considering "sourcing" their compressor to overseas competitors. Eventually, G.E. decided that they simply could not give up production of their central component, the compressor, to its overseas' competitors.

School districts produce a $40,000 "product" over a thirteen-year timeline. The product of our schools is the development of character and potential in our young people: the Yankee ingenuity needed to keep the U.S. competitve. If G.E. finds it necessary to totally redesign every product and every production line to remain competitive, it is even more critical for schools to do likewise. Who, then, is investing the hundreds of millions of dollars necessary to develop successful schools?

Countless reports published over the past five years have clearly described the failures of the current production process for education. Rising poverty, increasing numbers of dropouts, and a malaise of helplessness pervade our schools. More children need more help than ever before. Schools, like businesses, are asked to do more with less, and schools, like businesses, must find ways to succeed in this generation or face irreversible decline and bankruptcy. Unless schools find a way to create more success for more students, we face a future of failure: student failure, school failure, business failure, and ultimately, national failure.

My journey has taken me specifically in quest of those certain vitally important production line components necessary to create dynamic, living organizations.

The Dynamic Organization

Dynamic organizations have three interconnected components:

- ❑ a vision that is compelling,
- ❑ decision making focused on results, and

- employee commitment to a learning culture.

When these are nurtured and strengthened, over time they create a dynamic, self-renewing organization.

Vision is the compass setting the direction for the organization. Outcome- driven decisions are the vehicle providing the process to get us there. Employees are the drivers of the vehicle; their involvement on a daily basis determines the rate of progress. All three components must be present and they must be utilized consistently over time before results begin to appear.

Identification of these components has been a learning experience for me. Asking the right question, in the right way, at the right time, has been challenging. As the Chinese say:

"when the student is ready the teacher will come."

In some cases I heard answers early on in my fellowship that I didn't understand until later.

For example, the CEO of a large Boston-based consulting firm described the importance of getting employee ownership in the company vision. I asked how they maintained that ownership after the first initial group of employees had set the direction for the company. His answer was that it "just happens." Years later, after hearing the same answer from many dynamic organizations, I now understand that it does just that - it just happens. When the vision, the decisions and the employees are functioning as a unit, new employees are assimilated into the culture.

Interviews with 300 leaders on four continents have been used to refine and identify aspects of how dynamic organizations build that kind of a culture.

A Compelling Vision

Dynamic organizations know where they are going and can describe their vision with both clarity and simplicity. Vision statements create meaning for the employee and set standards that customers can expect.

- Apple Computer set out to create a mental bicycle - a tool that would take people farther, faster. Their sales went from zero to one billion dollars in only five years.

- Willow Creek Community Church in Chicago wanted to "reach the unchurched and produce healthy church members." In fourteen years they grew from zero to 14,000 members.

- Ford Motor Company decreed that "quality is job one." Although still second in market share, they regularly challenge General Motors for the position of the most profitable auto manufacturer in North America.

Vision also requires a clear sense of who your customer is. You can have an excellent product but still not have the right product for the right place at the right time. One Minnesota company was in the business of creating christening gowns. Using hundred-year-old gowns as their patterns, it succeeded in creating a beautiful product. Unfortunately, the cost was prohibitive for rural Minnesota. Even urban Minneapolis couldn't produce the volume needed to support the struggling business. Finally, they found the customer volume they needed in the cosmopolitan markets of New York and Paris. They now sell more of the gowns than they can produce - at $400 apiece.

Decision Making focused on Results

Employees make dozens of decisions daily. Organizations make hundreds of decisions daily. Individually and collectively, those decisions move the organization closer to or farther from their vision. Dynamic organizations do not leave decision making to chance. They build their decision making around four key elements:

- attitudes based on philosophy and beliefs,
- knowledge based on planning, research and first hand knowledge,
- skills based on training and development, and

❑ results based on the vision and objectives.

These elements complement each other and match the vision of the organization.

Attitudes - are the values and beliefs that give character to organizations. They define how you do business and why.

❑ Johnson and Johnson weathered the Tylenol crises because of their commitment to the customer, to safety, and to open, honest communication.

❑ Hewlett Packard operates from a ten-item set of values that have become known to employees as the "H-P Way."

❑ Forum North America, a rapidly growing consulting firm, has an employee developed code that emphasizes RESPECT for each other and for their customers.

❑ Nordstrom and Stu Leonard's, rapidly growing retailers in two very different businesses (clothing and food), built their business around an underlying belief that the "customer is always right."

Skills - represent an investment in the most important resource any organization has ... its people. When knowledge doubles every two years we can no longer expect employees to use only those skills that they were hired with.

❑ IBM requires all employees to be retrained annually with one to four weeks of mandatory training.

❑ CareerTrack, a training firm, requires all employees to take at least one CareerTrack seminar each quarter.

Basic training is not enough. Successful organizations create experts who have mastered the craft and are able to see new and better ways to get the job done.

Singapore is creating a talented work force that actively pursues improved productivity. Engineers on the production lines help devise ways to improve efficiency. Apple Computer, for example, revised U.S. components to accommodate assembly improvements suggested by line workers in Singapore (Magaziner).

Knowledge - is acquired through research and development, market research, and pilot projects. Successful organizations act on the best knowledge available.

Until recently, Ford scoffed at anything "not invented here." When they made the Taurus, however, they disassembled every car, worldwide, in that class. They identified 600 different components - and decided which to incorporate in their car.

Hewlett-Packard did likewise in the monitor business. They went to their competitors in Asia to find out everything they could about monitors. They were able to cut costs by over 50%. That enabled them to stay competitive in a field that has come to be dominated by overseas' manufacturers.

CareerTrack has gone from start-up to $15 million in sales because they pay close attention to details. Their training programs are built around four components: what the customer wants, who has the best solution, how best to package the training and who can do the best as presenter. What others try to do alone, CareerTrack breaks into four separate phases - each subjected to exacting standards.

Firms like Motorola and Corning have invested heavily over long periods of time in R&D to create knowledge that led to new products. In a ten-year period, Motorola invested $100 million to develop the MicroTAC cellular phone that you can carry in your pocket. Corning invested extensively in R&D for seventeen years before their fiber optics began to pay off.

Results - Dynamic organizations regularly assess how they are doing by checking profits, asking their customers, or using other meth-

ods. When they don't, they get into trouble.

Peters and Waterman tell about the "chicken test" that Rolls Royce put off for three years. The chicken test checks turbine engines to see if they can keep operating when several dozen chickens are sucked through their intake. Rolls Royce put off the test - and then experienced engine failure. They lost thousands of worker hours by not finding out about the problem sooner. **Peters says we need to "make more failures faster so we can learn to improve more quickly."**

Nordstrom, a leading retailer, uses phantom shoppers who circulate in stores to see how clerks handle tough customers. Rewards of up to $1000 are available to those who handle customers as trained.

One consultant was reluctant to work with a client that wasn't committed to results. The company was failing and needed help. When asked by the consultant how many products they had, **the client didn't know.** After checking they found that they had ninety six. When asked by the consultant which products were profitable, *the client didn't know.* They found that twenty four were profitable. When asked by the consultant which products were most profitable, *the client didn't know.* They found that eight products accounted for 80% of their profit. **That company is now profitable and growing because they asked, and acted on, tough results-based questions.**

John Young, CEO, challenged Hewlett-Packard to cut in half the amount of time that it took to take a product from new idea stage to production. No one knew how long it took currently to take an idea into production. They had to devise a whole new measurement system and then find ways to produce new products twice as fast.

Successful organizations have more than vision and decision making that includes the above categories. In fact, most companies do most of the above at least part of the time. The truly effective companies cycle through these steps ceaselessly. It becomes a living organism as thousands of decisions get made in the same framework.

They also avoid getting hung up on any one component. They address them in balance. They do research and planning, but they aren't afraid to act on the edge of what they know. The have philosophies about how they work but they also focus on results.

Employee Commitment to a Learning Culture

An energetic leader or leadership team may be able to influence the vision and decision making in an organization by sheer persistence. Dynamic organizations, however, reach the point where **everyone** in the organization knows: 1) where they are going, and 2) how to make decisions. The learning curve steepens. Successes grow by multiplication rather than by addition. A sense of community develops in which good things do "just happen."

This occurs by working with the most important resource that any organization has - **their people.** Dynamic organizations work with their people to assure commitment, not compliance. At least four steps are needed to build that kind of ownership:

1) commitment to employee success,
2) work teams that become a way of life,
3) employee buy in, and
4) persistence.

Success - Dynamic organizations let people know that they have faith in them. They set clear goals, provide the assistance needed to succeed and celebrate the success.

The Women's Economic Development Corporation (WEDCO) in Minneapolis sets hurdles for each step in business plan writing. Women who participate learn to be successful as they master each step in the process. The result is a 95% success ratio for the women who start

businesses; a marked contrast to typical start-ups where the success rate is closer to 10%.

Calvary Church, one of the fastest growing churches in Los Angeles, has a goal of "no unemployment." Everyone in the church has a task and knows why they are indispensible to the success of the church.

The Marriott Hotel in Salt Lake City celebrates quarterly with employees. Families are invited twice annually. Each department selects its own employee of the quarter. A lively slide presentation features photos of employees at work. Employees are treated to a hosted buffet in a festive setting which recognizes special employees and celebrates the importance of all employees.

Teams - Successful companies use teams to improve decision making. Effective teams have three elements:

- ❑ focus,
- ❑ consistency over time, and
- ❑ accountability.

Ford Motor Company's Team Taurus illustrates all three of these points. They focused on developing a quality car, they spent six years on the design, and they restructured to insure cooperation and quality.

The traditional process was sequential: from design to engineering to marketing to sales. By the time each level got the car, it was too late to make changes. Team Taurus focused on creating the outstanding car in its class. Parts, engineering, design, marketing and even insurance decisions were incorporated into a cooperative planning process that lasted six years. The organization shifted accountability from marketing, sales, etc. to the leader of Team Taurus. They identified clearly what they wanted, a great Taurus, not just great parts.

Teams work because they are dynamic and because they are creative.

- ❑ Apple Computers use of countless task forces keeps the company dynamic. Individuals self-identify problems. They invite others to work with them to explore issues and present solutions. Their proposals lead to changes that keep Apple fresh, alive and current.

- ❑ Massachusetts Institute of Technology found that cross- disciplinary teams show an increase in creativity for eighteenmonths after they are formed. Combining talents in different ways leads to better decisions and better ideas.

- ❑ Volvo developed entire production lines around the concept of teams. General Motors' new Saturn division will do likewise.

Buy-in - Dynamic organizations get people to sign up. They identify a purpose or a cause that goes beyond the individual or the job. They challenge employees to "want to become" part of something bigger than themselves. Bennis says that effective leaders "create meaning" for employees.

At Cross Pen, every employee is an inspector. Any employee can reject a pen at any time. They're all a part of creating quality. Each employee knows that they are an important part of making Cross Pen a successful company.

At Willow Creek Church, you must attend for one year, give regularly and have a role in the church before you can ask to become a member.

At Crown International, when a people are hired they are asked to list what they expect of the company. The company then tells the new employee whether the company can deliver or not.

Successful companies build a compact with their employees. Employees know what is expected of them and what they can expect in return.

Persistence - requires a high level of commitment from all parts of the organization. Changing the culture in an established organization may take a decade or more. Newly established company "start ups" or rapidly growing organizations can change more easily. As one pastor explained,

"giving birth may be painful, but it's much easier than raising the dead."

Apple Computer works this process continuously. "Apple Values" are printed on a pocket sized card. Their values represent what they want the company to become. The values are reviewed regularly to be sure that is where they want to "plant the flag." Subsequent sessions focus on: what moves them toward their values, and what moves them away from their values. They make changes accordingly. Employees come to know and live the values. Locks on storerooms, for example, have to go if you are committed to the concepts of "trust" and "teamwork."

The Soul of a New Community

People are at the heart of a dynamic community. The leader can lead only if people follow. Leaders do whatever it takes to communicate vision, decision making and employee commitment. Successful leaders use hiring, firing, training, recruitment, publications, speeches, meetings, media - anything that moves the organization toward what it can become.

Dynamic organizations are alive. Each day new stories circulate about how individuals made a difference in moving the organization ahead. You can tell how vibrant an organization is by how old the stories are. Talk to any Nordstrom customer and they'll tell you stories about how a Nordstrom employee went out of their way to provide extraordinary service to a customer.

Ken Willig, former CEO at Celluland, asks employees what they want to become. If their vision doesn't fit the picture of the organization he is trying to build, he lets them know. Once they agree on what the employee wants to become, he sets about pushing that employee to live up to those expectations.

Peter Senge at Massachusetts Institute of Technology is working with a handful of CEO's around the U.S. who want to create "learning companies," companies that continue to learn, develop and improve as a matter of course.

Hanover Insurance, for example, recently discovered through one of their learning groups that increasingly large settlements may not be the fault of greedy trial lawyers or sympathetic juries. Rather, the cause may be with claims adjusters who are underpaid and undertrained. Adjusters usually stay long enough only to move on to the next step on the career ladder. Tight accounting gives them little latitude to settle claims. The result is a feeling of uncaring companies. Claimants feel ill-used even if the settlement is fair. Having learned what is wrong, Hanover can now begin the process of decision making to remedy the situation.

When companies have in place a vision that is compelling, decision making focused on results, and employee commitment to growth, they create, over time, a self-directed learning community

Dynamic Schools

For the last three years, Pasco School District, where I serve as superintendent, applies these concepts by:

1) creating a dynamic school district,
2) encouraging similar growth in other school districts around the state, and
3) planting the seeds to grow a dynamic education system in Washington State.

The goal has been to create a series of self-renewing organizations that work together to create student success. Locally, teachers have committed to make students succeed. Twenty school districts across Washington have committed to begin implementing school renewal efforts. Statewide there is a renewed vision for

student success on the part of political, educational, and business leaders.

My dream includes two things. First, a vision that focuses on the outcome of success for all students. Second, a mission that creates an ongoing, dynamic process of school improvement based on the best of what we know about: 1) how students learn, and 2) how people work in organizations.

This is a productivity model similar to that described earlier for G.E.'s production of refrigerators. In the case of schools, the current production line doesn't work. Most reform efforts attempt to speed up, slow down, or tinker with a bankrupt production model. This last section describes how new production lines for schools might compare with the processes that make for dynamic organizations.

Vision

The vision for Pasco Schools is "Success for Every Child." This represents a departure from the traditional process of sorting students. Historically, schools have sorted students into the top third (A and B students), the middle third (C students), and the bottom third (D and E students). In essence, schools have created success for only the top third of their students. Given the need for larger numbers of more highly trained workers in the U.S., schools can no longer afford to fail 2/3 of our students. We must find ways to create success for all students. This is the school equivalent of business' focus on "zero defects," or "quality as job one."

In Pasco, we encountered parental resistance to our vision of "success for every child." If every child succeeds, parents of the top students worried that the value of their child's education would be diminished. In rethinking the concerns of parents we now talk about "success for **YOUR** child." That includes all students as it did before, but now it is a personal commitment to the student most important to you as a parent - **YOUR** child.

Decision Making Focused on Results

Decision making in Pasco considers the four aspects of: attitude, knowledge, skills and results. Each of the components is documented, agreed to by staff and intentionally taught and used throughout the district.

Attitude - We emphasize total responsibility: student responsibility, parent responsibility, and teacher responsibility. We are each responsible to see that learning does indeed occur. A two-page listing of belief statements includes ten key beliefs that we have all agreed to follow. Each belief statement is research-based and deals with conditions that contribute to learning. Examples include: working cooperatively, setting clear objectives, and using positive expectations.

Knowledge - There is, today, a wealth of information about what it takes to create effective teaching and effective schooling. Hundreds of studies now agree on the same basic components. Creating success for every student is an achievable goal. Pasco School District obtains new knowledge through research and development and by demonstrating success with programs developed elsewhere.

In the area of early childhood education, we have done our own research to develop a successful all day, every day kindergarten program. Results from a five-year longitudinal study show dramatic success.

The instructional process we use comes from the best research about how students learn. This has been developed into a thirteen-step instructional process that is taught to teachers by in-district trainers. In the area of classroom management, we are applying concepts of "reality therapy" which emphasizes student responsibility. The decision making process we use was pioneered in Johnson City, N.Y. These components are tested and approved for Pasco School District. Employees from the district are

then trained to become trainers for our staff.

Skills - We found that there was a big difference between teaching and learning. Teachers came, sat and listened, but didn't act on what they learned. We had to create not just the training, but evaluation, coaching, remediation, and support networks as well. After three years and an investment of over one million dollars, most teachers are just now beginning to use consistently the best of what we know about the teaching process. Similar sustained efforts will be required to apply new learning in the area of classroom management.

Teachers must become so proficient in their craft that they can intervene on a daily basis to insure the quality of education for every child. This is equivalent to the Singapore engineer who can influence Apple's production process in the U.S. Or it can be compared to the physician who has the professional knowledge and expertise to choose between two or three possible treatments and select the best one for that particular patient.

Results - Most districts rely on standardized test scores to measure student learning. Unfortunately, tests measure only academics and are designed to trick students into selecting one of the incorrect answers. Results in Pasco are measured, not only with standardized test scores, but also with multiple indicators of student and staff success. Evaluation becomes an ongoing, almost daily, process that drives our behavior.

Student results are measured in several ways. First, Pasco decided that students must demonstrate skills in: self esteem, learning to learn, process skills, basic thinking skills, and respect for others. These skills are needed for student success in the future; academics alone will not be enough. Second, we are identifying "critical learning" for each subject. These are the building blocks that students must master before they can be successful in the next course of study. Finally, teachers give preliminary tests to see how well students learned (and how well the teacher taught). Students then get a brief "reteach" before taking the final test. The goal is for all students to earn A or B grades. This process is similar to "just in time" and "zero defect" systems used in business.

Teacher results are also measured in multiple ways. Formal evaluations are based on mutually identified goals for improved teaching. In addition, trainers visit teachers every two weeks to provide technical assistance, observe teaching, or give support and encouragement. Finally, teachers meet four times each week in teaching teams to insure the greatest success possible for the greatest number of their students.

Program results are measured by staff surveys, site reviews and independent outside agencies. The purpose of all of this is to make data-based decisions on actual results.

Summary: These steps form a four step decision making process. Decisions are checked against:

- a basic attitude that all students can learn,
- skill development of staff,
- the best knowledge about teaching and learning, and
- measurable results.

Formal decision making and problem solving processes are used at every level in the district. For any issue, groups of employees can come together, identify the issue, and analyze it according to these four predetermined agreed-upon criteria. This allows the district to make more quality decisions quicker.

Employee Commitment

Commitment is the key to the successful implementation of a new production model. Tearing down the existing model and building a new model while remaining in production requires a high level of staff commitment. **If employees don't believe in what you are doing, it won't happen.**

Success - Pasco School District uses a staff

publication, "The Four Pointer," to recognize successes. Celebrations are held at the building level and, thanks to financial support from Federal Express and the teachers' association, the district level. Trainers and site review teams provide feedback to teachers and principals on how things are going. Surveys and outside observers are used to document progress.

Teams - Pasco School District has a whole series of inter-connected teams. Every teacher is on a team of two or three. Their job is to make sure that students succeed. Every building has a team of teachers who, together with the principal, make decisions about instruction in that building. There is a separate team of teachers, principals, and district administrators who make district level decisions. These teams provide the support and accountability needed to make quality decisions.

Buy-in - Initial support for the process came from principals and the school board. Principals were challenged to adopt a program of continuous growth and development. After being given time to explore alternative approaches, they reached consensus in approving the process. The board acted to formally adopt the process.

The first two years included lengthy staff discussions about vision, beliefs, values and the way we do our job. **It took time to get the buy-in necessary to move away from the tradition of independent teachers who "rent a classroom" without being a part of the overall system of learning.** Now we are creating a community of professionals where people influence each other to act on the best of what we know about instruction. Because of the district commitment to ongoing self renewal, seven teachers (about 2%) elected to leave Pasco last year. This is another indicator that Pasco is developing a community of people who want to learn and grow together.

Persistence - Pasco has an eleven-year history of improvement efforts: three years of foundation building, five years of annual goal setting, and three years of process building. Pasco has just now reached critical mass. Earlier stages caused an increase in student success, but were not sustainable because they did not have widespread commitment. Today we are moving toward the point where all staff are committed to creating student success and have been involved in the continuous process of decision making necessary to get us there.

Soul of a new community

Pasco School District has turned the corner. Stories multiply weekly. Eight schools (out of 12) have reached the level where teachers are consciously practicing improved teaching techniques and intentional decision making. The Washington Business Roundtable, a consortium of the thirty largest employers in Washington, is working with us to validate our success and help disseminate the concepts across the state.

There is a network of about two dozen school districts in Washington that are working to implement this outcome driven instructional process. The network incorporated, separate from Pasco School District, and recently sponsored a national conference in Washington State.

Washington State is watching to see what happens in Pasco and other network districts. The Washington State Senate Education Committee visited Pasco. The Education Renewal Institute, a state-wide non-profit organization, provided funding for an outcome based evaluation project in Pasco. The Education Vision Team, a collaborative effort of business, government and education leaders, adopted a state wide vision focused on student success. State conferences for school administrators and school directors featured speakers and workshops on student success and school restructuring. The Governor of Washington selected "success for every student" as the theme for his year as chair of the Education Commission of the States. The Washington State Legislature

recently passed into law a bill called "All kids can learn." The vision of student success is multiplying across the State of Washington. Needed now is the ongoing commitment to continuous intentional decision making that will make the goal of student success a reality.

Conclusion: Schools must change. Businesses must change. The problem is similar to that described by Tom Clancy in his book, The Cardinal in the Kremlin:

> **"Every Politburo member knew - had known for years - the things that needed to be changed. It was the method of change that no one could agree on. It was like turning a ship to a new course, he thought, but knowing that the rudder might break if you did so. Continuing in the same path would allow the ship to plow on into...what? Where was the Soviet Union heading? They didn't even know that. But to change course meant risk, and if the rudder broke - if the Party lost it's ascendancy - then there would be only chaos. That was a choice that no rational man would wish to face, but it was choice whose necessity no rational man could deny. Someone has to try, and that someone is me."**

Therein lies the challenge for every business and every school in our nation. We must change. We must accept the risk. We must try. We must retool our production lines. We must learn to become what we are not yet. This creative tension between the vision of global competition and the increasing challenge of a more difficult student clientele must challenge us to invent living, breathing, learning communities in our schools and in our businesses.

What does it take to create a dynamic growing organization? One where common people achieve the extraordinary? Vision, alone, is not enough. It takes vision, decision making and employee commitment. It also takes day by day consistency over time to create and nurture the soul of a learning community.